

Take Charge of Your Finances: How to Succeed in an Unpredictable Economy

A banker gives advice on surviving the fluctuating market and making wise adjustments.

By Fred Graziano

Managing a nonprofit organization can be daunting in these uncertain times. But with the right financial strategies, you can flourish.

Keep an eye on your budget. The best way to control your spending is to create detailed financial reports on a regular basis. Account for every expense, no matter its size, to create an accurate account.

Small things like visits to the bank can add up with miles, staff time, and gas. Check to see if your bank offers free online banking, and sign up. Also ask your banker about cash management options that may benefit your bottom line.

Now's a good time to evaluate if you're getting all you need from your bank.

Make sure saving is part of your budget. Invest your money somewhere safe, such as a money market fund that owns government-backed securities or a savings account with a highly rated bank.

Talk to your banker. Meet with a banking professional, someone whose job it is to help nonprofits make the most of every dollar. Find a bank that tailors its services and products for nonprofit customers.

Your bank should be able to help you secure free account services, find resources to help raise capital or new sources of funds, and reduce financing costs.

Assess your spending habits. Just because something fits into your budget doesn't mean it's a smart expense. Take an honest look at your spending practices.

Begin with general expenses, such as those associated with your programs. Ask yourself: Is the program still relevant and timely? If the program still makes sense but vendor costs are high, find creative ways to save money such as enlisting local volunteers to help with administrative tasks or finding companies that do pro-bono work.

If you can't afford to buy copying machines and other equipment you need, consider leasing the equipment. Or, if you prefer to own, look for a low-interest line of credit. Always consider the pros and cons, including interest and long-term needs.

Reexamine your banking needs. You could consolidate obsolete accounts, lower or possibly eliminate fees, and choose banking products and services that meet your needs today. Now's a good time to evaluate if you're getting all you need from your bank.

Many banks offer a wide range of budget-friendly services to provide you with accurate account reporting. When exploring your options, check for services that offer less fees, more options, and services tailored for you.



To help with cash flow, look for banking products that reward you for doing business. There are many such programs. For example, TD Bank's free affinity program pays cash rewards based on the balance in participating members' accounts. So, the more you involve your organization's supporters, the more cash you earn. ■

Fred Graziano is the regional banking president for TD Bank. For more information, contact your local TD Bank branch at 888-751-9000.

Your Resource Bank

Use these articles (www.snpo.org/members) to power up your finances:

Finding the Right Bank (Vol. 11, No. 4)

Is That Expense Justified? (Vol. 20, No. 5)

Analyze Your Finances to Ensure Your Mission (Vol. 19, No. 5)

Financial Stability: An Impossible Dream? (Vol. 15, No. 3)

Create a Budget that Works for You (Vol. 15, No. 4)

Monitoring Your Organization's Financial Health: A CEO's Guide (Vol. 14, No. 6)

Are You Financially Empowered? A Quiz (Vol. 15, No. 1)